

# Government Department Subject Talk



29 March 2017

# Degree programmes

- BSc Government
- BSc Government and Economics
- BSc Government and History
- BSc Politics and International Relations
- BSc Politics and Philosophy
  
- PPE (administered by Philosophy)

# Who am I?

- Dr Thomas J. Leeper
- Assistant Professor in Political Behaviour
- PhD Political Science, 2012  
Northwestern University
- Undergraduate teaching
  - “Research Design in Political Science”
  - “Experimental Politics”

## 1 Why Government at LSE?

## 2 What Is Research-informed Teaching?

## 3 Q & A

## 1 Why Government at LSE?

## 2 What Is Research-informed Teaching?

## 3 Q & A

**Location, location, location...**

















SE-Oxford Commission on  
**State Fragility,  
Growth and  
Development**

Oxford Commission on  
**State Fragility,  
Growth and  
Development**









**Your fellow students...**















**The academic staff...**

European  
Institute

[www.he.ac.uk/ei](http://www.he.ac.uk/ei)

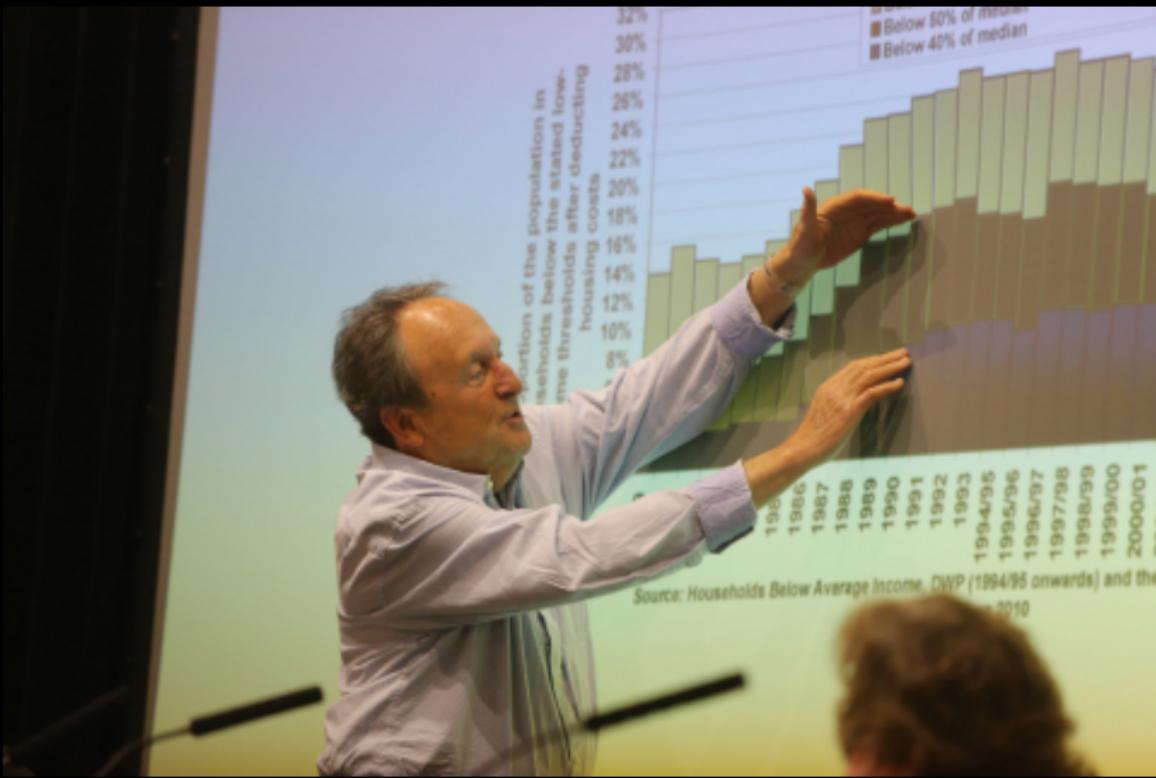
WILL EDGE IT™

IN	0
OUT	0

WERE TO REMAIN OR LEAVE









# **Research-informed teaching...**









# LSE EDUCATION STRATEGY

2015-2020



# Features of an LSE Education

- 1 One-on-one advising from member of academic staff

# Features of an LSE Education

- 1 One-on-one advising from member of academic staff
- 2 Small and large group teaching

# Features of an LSE Education

- 1 One-on-one advising from member of academic staff
- 2 Small and large group teaching
- 3 LSE100: The LSE Course

# Features of an LSE Education

- 1 One-on-one advising from member of academic staff
- 2 Small and large group teaching
- 3 LSE100: The LSE Course
- 4 Undergraduate research opportunities
  - Coursework
  - Undergraduate research internships
  - LSE Groups
  - Posters in Parliament
  - Research seminar series

# Features of an LSE Education

- 1 One-on-one advising from member of academic staff
- 2 Small and large group teaching
- 3 LSE100: The LSE Course
- 4 Undergraduate research opportunities
  - Coursework
  - Undergraduate research internships
  - LSE Groups
  - Posters in Parliament
  - Research seminar series
- 5 Dissertation

# General Course Structure

## 1 First Year

- “Introduction to Political Science”
- “Introduction to Political Theory”
- Two further modules
- LSE100

# General Course Structure

## 1 First Year

- “Introduction to Political Science”
- “Introduction to Political Theory”
- Two further modules
- LSE100

## 2 Second Year

- Mix of Government and other modules
- Expand breadth of knowledge

# General Course Structure

## 1 First Year

- “Introduction to Political Science”
- “Introduction to Political Theory”
- Two further modules
- LSE100

## 2 Second Year

- Mix of Government and other modules
- Expand breadth of knowledge

## 3 Third Year

- Advanced seminars ( $n < 15$ )
- Optional dissertation

# Degree programmes

- BSc Government
- BSc Government and Economics
- BSc Government and History
- BSc Politics and International Relations
- BSc Politics and Philosophy
  
- PPE (administered by Philosophy)



**“Rerum cognoscere causas”**

**“Rerum cognoscere causas”**

*To know the causes of things*

# “Rerum cognoscere causas”

- Forward causal questions
- Backward causal questions

# “Rerum cognoscere causas”

- Forward causal questions
  - What effect(s) does X have?
  
- Backward causal questions

# “Rerum cognoscere causas”

- Forward causal questions
  - What effect(s) does X have?
  - “What if?” questions
- Backward causal questions

# “Rerum cognoscere causas”

- Forward causal questions
  - What effect(s) does X have?
  - “What if?” questions
- Backward causal questions
  - What causes Y?

# “Rerum cognoscere causas”

- Forward causal questions
  - What effect(s) does X have?
  - “What if?” questions
  
- Backward causal questions
  - What causes Y?
  - Why does Y occur?

**What effect did the end of  
South Africa apartheid have  
public goods delivery?**

**What role do gender quotas  
have on the political  
participation of women?**

**How can governments use  
liberal-paternalist *nudges* to  
affect public behaviour?**

**What effect will Britain's exit  
from the EU have on British  
economic and social life?**

**How do land rights shape the  
political behaviour and  
institutions of Sub-Saharan  
Africa?**

**How do elections affect  
citizens emotionally?**

**What effect did protest activity have during the Arab Spring?**

**How does the non-verbal  
behaviour of Bank of England  
Governors affect their political  
influence?**

**How do immigration policies  
affect the political and  
economic freedoms of the  
native-born?**



**Why did some people vote to  
Leave the EU while others  
voted to Remain?**

**How does nationalism develop  
in the politics of South-East  
Asian states?**

**How do local politicians make decisions about aid distribution in Malawi?**

**Why do so many terrorists  
have degrees in engineering?**

**How do leaders of one-party states decide which partisans to purge to preserve political control?**

**How do post-conflict societies  
build stable political  
institutions?**



# “What works?” discourse

- Causal inference is not just an academic exercise

# “What works?” discourse

- Causal inference is not just an academic exercise
- Governments, firms, and NGOs worldwide want to know *what works?*



# “What works?” discourse

- Causal inference is not just an academic exercise
- Governments, firms, and NGOs worldwide want to know *what works?*

# “What works?” discourse

- Causal inference is not just an academic exercise
- Governments, firms, and NGOs worldwide want to know *what works?*
- To do that we need students to not just be passionate about learning what we already know but also *creating* new knowledge

# Drawing causal inferences

- Causal inference is the effort to *explain* how and why the world works as it does
  - What consequences does *something* have?
  - Why does *something* happen?

# Drawing causal inferences

- Causal inference is the effort to *explain* how and why the world works as it does
  - What consequences does *something* have?
  - Why does *something* happen?
- This goes beyond looking for patterns
  - Correlation is not correlation!

# Drawing causal inferences

- Causal inference is the effort to *explain* how and why the world works as it does
  - What consequences does *something* have?
  - Why does *something* happen?
- This goes beyond looking for patterns
  - Correlation is not causation!
- How, then, do we identify causal relationships in politics?

# Fundamental problem of causal inference

Causal inference involves inferring *what would have happened* in a counterfactual reality *where the potential cause took on a different value*

# Fundamental problem of causal inference

Causal inference involves inferring *what would have happened* in a counterfactual reality *where the potential cause took on a different value*

We can only observe the reality that occurs!

# “A Christmas Carol”

- 1843 novel by Charles Dickens
- Ebenezer Scrooge is shown his own future by the “Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come”
- Has the choice to either:
  - stay on current path (one counterfactual), or
  - change his ways (take a different counterfactual)

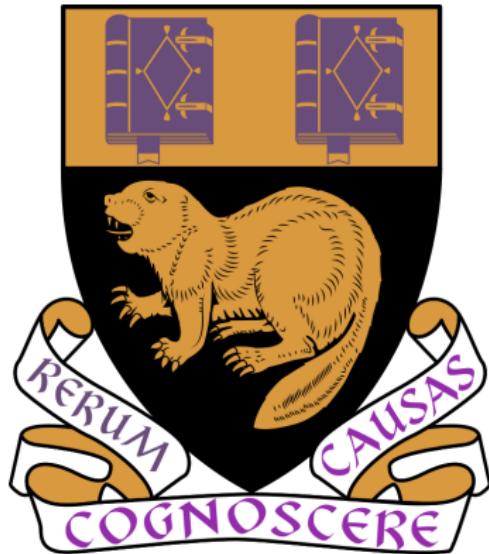
# Drawing causal inferences

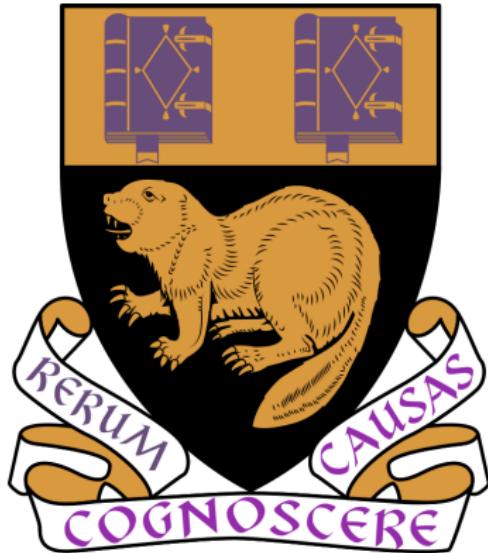
- Causality is defined as the difference between two *potential* outcomes:
  - 1 the outcome that occurs if  $X$  occurs
  - 2 the outcome that occurs if  $X$  does not occur

# Drawing causal inferences

- Causality is defined as the difference between two *potential* outcomes:
  - 1 the outcome that occurs if  $X$  occurs
  - 2 the outcome that occurs if  $X$  does not occur
- To know the causes of things we need to know how to gather evidence and process that evidence in order to *infer* causality when we cannot see it directly







*What works?*

# For more information...

- ... about admissions:  
“Applying to LSE” (Old Theatre): 11:30, 12:30, 14:30
- ... about courses:  
[http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/  
Default.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/Default.htm)
- ... about the Government Department:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/government/home.aspx>
- ... about LSE Education Strategy:  
[https://www.lse.ac.uk/about-lse/Image-assets/  
PDF/Education-Strategy.pdf](https://www.lse.ac.uk/about-lse/Image-assets/PDF/Education-Strategy.pdf)
- ... about public events:  
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Events>

# Questions?



# Photo credits

- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:City\\_of\\_London\\_skyline\\_from\\_London\\_City\\_Hall--Sept\\_2015--Crop\\_Aligned.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:City_of_London_skyline_from_London_City_Hall--Sept_2015--Crop_Aligned.jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palacio\\_de\\_Westminster--panoramio.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Palacio_de_Westminster--panoramio.jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Royal\\_Courts\\_of\\_Justice--Wide\\_Angle\\_Front.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Royal_Courts_of_Justice--Wide_Angle_Front.jpg)
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lselibray\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lselibray_2.jpg)
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/communications/files/2015/09/Facebook-pic-2-1024x538.jpg>
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British\\_Library\\_%2B\\_St\\_Pancras\\_7527-31hug.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Library_%2B_St_Pancras_7527-31hug.jpg)
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/liselibrary/22737505912/in/album-72157658449873093/>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/liselibrary/22737505912/in/album-72157658449873093/>
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/files/2011/09/Nick-Clegg-LSE.jpg>
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/reevaluating-gordon-brown-its-important-to-factor-context-into-our-assessment-of-political-leader>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/liselibrary/4153090140>
- [http://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/styles/ow\\_medium\\_feature/public/field/field\\_image\\_main/Cameron%20DSC05394\\_0.JPG?itok=JwW751KI](http://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/styles/ow_medium_feature/public/field/field_image_main/Cameron%20DSC05394_0.JPG?itok=JwW751KI)
- <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/five-minutes-with-nicola-sturgeon-minority-government-is-perfectly-capable-of-being-stable-gove>

